

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

**MID-PACIFIC REGION**

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**FRIANT-KERN/CROSS VALLEY CANALS INTERTIE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

**FONSI-07-70**

Recommended by:

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**Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**Friant-Kern/Cross Valley Canals Intertie Construction Project**

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the issuance of a permit to the Friant Water Authority (FWA) allowing construction on federal facilities and operation of a turnout on federal lands at mile post 151.81 is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Number EA-07-70, *Friant-Kern/Cross Valley Canals Intertie Construction Project*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

**BACKGROUND**

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to issue an MP-620 permit to FWA allowing construction on federal facilities and operation of a turnout on federal lands at mile post 151.81 (southeast of the intersection of Coffee and Brimhall Roads in the City of Bakersfield.) The permit would allow the construction of an interconnection (or Intertie) between the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) (a Federal Central Valley Project facility) and the Cross Valley Canal (CVC) (a privately owned facility) at their closest point. The connection would allow conveyance flexibility and therefore flexibility of use for surface water in the San Joaquin Valley by connecting the existing FKC to a recently approved pump station and junction box taking water from the afterbay of CVC Pumping Plant #6. Roughly 880 feet (ft) of eight ft diameter underground pipeline would be installed parallel to the AEWS Intake Canal to provide up to 500 cubic feet per second of flow between the FKC and the CVC, in either direction. The turnout in the FKC would be roughly 23 ft wide. The footprint of the project on federal land would be 100 ft by 240 ft for a total of 24,000 sq. ft. or 0.55 acres.

**FINDINGS**

**Water Resources:** The Proposed Action would be entirely piped, so water quality in the immediate vicinity of the project would not be affected. The project does not generate a need for water, and does not include as a component the pumping or acquisition of water. The finished project would be completely underground, except the turnout structure in the side of the existing FKC, and the surface would be returned to pre-existing grade after construction is complete. Therefore there would be no change to runoff patterns or quantities. The Proposed Action does not include any action that would result in deliveries of water that have not previously been environmentally analyzed and approved by Reclamation. Instead, the Proposed Action would allow previously approved water delivery activities to occur without conveyance constraints and on the contractor's demand pattern. The potential salinity increase in the FKC would not affect groundwater quality as the quantity of water of increased salinity is minor compared to the surface water applied on the eastside of the San Joaquin Valley. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no effect on water resources.

**Land Uses:** The Proposed Action would not result in a change to the surrounding land uses. The footprint of the construction is located in a heavily industrialized area and the construction will not change the land values and is consistent with the existing land use conditions. The Proposed Action

would primarily be subsurface and the majority of the four acres that will be the footprint for construction will go back to its original land use. Agricultural uses of the lands being served would continue, though with the improved water delivery reliability, agricultural productivity of crops may be enhanced and permanent plantings would be preserved. No land conversion is anticipated since water quantities would not change. The Proposed Action would have no effect on land use.

**Biological Resources:** According to biological surveys, the project action area showed no sign of SJKF dens or pupping sites due to longtime disturbance and regular maintenance. However, the report goes on to note that man made materials such as culverts and abandoned pipe are regularly used by SJKF as dens. The project site is currently vacant and cleared of any materials that may be used as dens, but during the construction period, management practices shall be undertaken to avoid temporary impacts to SJKF. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's standardized recommendations for protection of the SJKF will be implemented prior to or during ground disturbance. Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action will have no effect on Threaten and Endanger Species or on biological resources in general.

**Cultural Resources:** Reclamation has conducted a field survey of the proposed construction site and has concluded that even though there would be construction activities including excavation of a pipe trench, that given the highly disturbed nature of the site, no cultural resources are likely to be impacted during construction. Under the Proposed Action there would be no potential to affect historic properties. Reclamation is currently consulting with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the environmental analysis will no be finalized until consultation is complete.

**Indian Trust Assets:** There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the action area for the Proposed Action. The nearest Indian trust assets to this action are located at the about 38 miles away. This action would have no adverse effect on Indian trust assets.

**Socioeconomic Resources:** The Intertie conveyed water would be used to support existing water users by providing improved water reliability. With increased reliability, growers would maintain their higher value crops such as orchards or vineyards. Permanent crops improve overall economic conditions by generating a year-round demand for farm labor. By allowing currently planted high value crops to flourish, the Proposed Action maintains the socioeconomics of the project area. The Proposed Action allows the contemplation of conveying greater quantities of drought emergency water supplies that may be made available via the Aqueduct. To the extent these drought water supplies mitigate the economic impacts of a drought, the overall socio-economics of the project area would be improved. The effects of any drought relief conveyance would be analyzed under separate documentation when a specific project is proposed. The Proposed Action would have no effect on socioeconomic resources.

**Environmental Justice:** Intertie conveyed water would be used to support existing water users by providing improved water reliability. With increased reliability, growers would maintain their higher value crops such as orchards or vineyards. Permanent crops improve overall economic conditions by generating a year-round demand for farm labor a source of employment for many minority and disadvantaged populations. By allowing currently planted high value crops to flourish, the Proposed Action maintains the socioeconomics of the project area and allows agriculture to continue to provide jobs for minority and disadvantaged populations. By continuing

to provide employment at historic levels, the Proposed Action will have no effect on minority or disadvantaged populations.

**Cumulative Impacts:** The Proposed Action, when added to other past, present, and future actions does not result in additional diversions of water, or significantly impact biological, cultural, recreation or socioeconomic resources. Neither Indian Trust Assets nor disadvantaged or minority populations would be impacted. Water quality would not be degraded as a result of construction activities. Overall there would be no cumulative impacts due to this Proposed Action.